

Benavidez secured the classified documents and made his way back to the wreckage, where he aided the wounded out of the overturned aircraft, and gathered the stunned survivors into a defensive perimeter. Under increasing enemy automatic weapons and grenade fire, he moved around the perimeter distributing water and ammunition to his weary men, reinstilling in them a will to live and fight. Facing a buildup of enemy opposition with a beleaguered team, Sergeant Benavidez mustered his strength, began calling in tactical air strikes and directed the fire from supporting gunships to suppress the enemy's fire and so permit another extraction attempt. He was wounded again in his thigh by small arms fire while administering first aid to a wounded team member just before another extraction helicopter was able to land. His indomitable spirit kept him going as he began to ferry his comrades to the craft. On his second trip with the wounded, he was clubbed from additional wounds to his head and arms before killing his adversary. He then continued under devastating fire to carry the wounded to the helicopter. Upon reaching the aircraft, he spotted and killed two enemy soldiers who were rushing the craft from an angle that prevented the aircraft door gunner from firing upon them. With little strength remaining, he made one last trip to the perimeter to ensure that all classified material had been collected or destroyed, and to bring in the remaining wounded. Only then, in extremely serious condition from numerous wounds and loss of blood, did he allow himself to be pulled into the extraction aircraft. Sergeant Benavidez' gallant choice to join voluntarily his comrades who were in critical straits, to expose himself constantly to withering enemy fire, and his refusal to be stopped despite numerous severe wounds, saved the lives of at least eight men. His fearless personal leadership, tenacious devotion to duty, and extremely valorous actions in the face of overwhelming odds were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service, and reflect the utmost credit on him and the United States Army.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

REMEMBERING FALLEN HEROES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. KIRK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KIRK. Madam Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to honor 10 brave Americans who gave their lives in Afghanistan on October 26. After executing a flawless counternarcotics/counterinsurgency operation in Darreh-ye Bom Bazaar in Badghis Province in western Afghanistan, Drug Enforcement Administration Special

Agents Forrest Leamon, Chad Michael and Michael Weston were tragically killed when their Chinook helicopter crashed. Seven American soldiers were also lost in the crash and 26 more were injured.

Special Agents Weston, Leamon and Michael were serving as part of DEA's Foreign-deployed Advisory and Support Team (FAST), working in conjunction with the U.S. military, the Afghan National Army and counternarcotics police of Afghanistan to take down and dismantle major drug trafficking organizations supporting al Qaeda and the Taliban. The operation took place in a major drug bazaar just northeast of Herat City where known insurgents and opium traffickers frequently operate. Despite taking hostile fire, the operation resulted in the seizure of a very large amount of drugs, weapons, IED materials and pressure plates.

During the extraction of members from the site, one Chinook helicopter with 36 personnel aboard crashed, resulting in the deaths of 10 personnel, including the three DEA special agents. Early reports indicate that several of the survivors performed heroic and selfless acts of bravery to rescue their injured comrades from the downed Chinook.

Early this morning, the remains of these 10 brave men returned to Dover Air Force Base. I want to thank President Obama, Attorney General Holder and DEA Administrator Michele Leonhart for their presence on the tarmac as the caskets of our fallen heroes were carried off the plane by a military honor guard at 3:30 this morning. I also want to thank special agent in charge of Afghanistan and Pakistan, Michael Marsac, for caring for them.

For the DEA, these are the first casualties suffered since FAST team operations began in 2005. For such a close-knit organization, the loss of three agents is devastating. The importance of their mission in Afghanistan cannot be understated. Just a week ago, the U.N. issued a report showing that the Taliban makes more money off the drug trade than it did when they ruled Afghanistan and effectively cornered the market for opium. Today I think it is important that the House take a moment to reflect on these three men who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

Special Agent Michael Weston grew up in Pennsylvania and California, earning degrees in computer science and economics from Stanford University in 1994 and a juris doctor from Harvard Law School in 1997. As a major in the Marine Corps Reserve, he served in Iraq, Norway and the Panama Canal Zone. Agent Weston joined the DEA in 2003, serving in the Richmond, Virginia, district office until he volunteered to deploy to Kabul to serve the DEA Kabul country office. The 37-year-old Weston is survived by his wife Cynthia Tidler, his mother Judy Zarit, his father Steven Weston, and his brother Thomas Weston.

Special Agent Forrest Leamon grew up in Ukiah, California. He served in the United States Navy for 9 years as a cryptologic technician, earning awards for his service in Southwest Asia and Bosnia. He joined DEA in 2002, serving in the Washington and El Paso field divisions before volunteering to serve on a FAST team in Afghanistan in 2007. Agent Leamon first served multiple FAST team tours in Afghanistan over the last 2 years. He is survived by his wife Ana Lopez Valdenea and their unborn child, his parents Sue and Richard Leamon, and his sister Heather.

Special Agent Chad Michael grew up in Muncy and Hughesville, Pennsylvania. He graduated from St. Leo University in Florida with a degree of criminal justice. After 3 years with the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office in Tampa, Florida, he joined DEA in 2004. Agent Michael served with distinction in the Miami field division before volunteering to serve with a FAST team in Afghanistan in September. Agent Michael was 30 years old and is survived by his mother Debra Hartz, his stepfather Leo Hartz, his brother, Eric Michael, and his fiancée Paola.

Madam Speaker, our thoughts go with these families. We know we've lost many military personnel, but this is new and heavy casualties for the DEA and their families who have all given their lives in the service of the United States, her allies and our objectives in Afghanistan.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CUMMINGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GOHMERT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.